

UNCLASSIFIED

E92

Current Class: [REDACTED]  
Current Handling: EXDIS  
Document Number: 1999LIMA04555

Page: 1

Channel: n/a

PTQ0329

PAGE 01 LIMA 04555 01 OF 02 222018Z  
ACTION SS-00

INFO LOG-00 ADS-00 SAS-00 /000W  
-----E427A0 222021Z /38

R 222021Z JUL 99  
FM AMEMBASSY LIMA  
TO DIRONDCP WASHDC  
SECSTATE WASHDC 9663

RELEASED IN FULL

[REDACTED] SECTION 01 OF 02 LIMA 004555

EXDIS DECAPTIONED

ONDCP FOR DIRECTOR MCCAFFREY FROM LIMA NARCOTICS COUNTRY TEAM  
SECSTATE FOR WHA AND INL

E.O. 12958: DECL: 1.6X6  
TAGS: SNAR PE

SUBJECT: D/ONDCP VISIT - THE MONTESINOS FACTOR

1. (U) [REDACTED] CLASSIFIED BY CHARGE' HEATHER HODGES.  
REASON 1.6(XL).

2. (C) THE GOOD NEWS: THE PROPOSED VISIT OF GENERAL  
MCCAFFREY TO PERU IN LATE AUGUST 1999 CAN BE EXTRAORDINARILY  
POSITIVE AND HELPFUL IN EMPHASIZING THE UNITED STATES  
[REDACTED]

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GOVERNMENT'S CONTINUED COMMITMENT TO SUPPORT PERU IN ITS  
EFFORTS TO FURTHER REDUCE COCA CULTIVATION AND REVERSE  
RECENT UPWARD TRENDS IN COCA PRICES.

3. (C) THE NOT SO GOOD NEWS: THE VISIT WILL ALMOST  
CERTAINLY OPEN SOME OLD WOUNDS THAT HAVE NOT FULLY HEALED IN  
THE AFTERMATH OF PUBLIC STATEMENTS MADE IN WASHINGTON IN MAY  
1998 ABOUT THE ALWAYS CONTROVERSIAL PERUVIAN NATIONAL  
SECURITY ADVISOR VLADIMIRO MONTESINOS TORRES. THOSE  
STATEMENTS RESULTED IN A MEDIA FRENZY IN LIMA THAT GAVE THE  
OPPOSITION AND THE MANY MONTESINOS BASHERS HERE ONE OF THEIR  
BETTER DAYS. THE RETURN OF GENERAL MCCAFFREY TO PERU DURING  
A PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION YEAR WILL SPELL MEDIA CIRCUS WITH  
THE OPPOSITION USING THEIR OUTLETS TO RESURRECT THE PAST AND  
ADD NEW FUEL TO THE FIRE BASED ON RECENT U.S. CONGRESSIONAL  
RESOLUTIONS CRITICAL OF USG COOPERATION AND THE PERUVIAN

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
REVIEW AUTHORITY: DONALD A. JOHNSTON  
DATE/CASE ID: 28 SEP 2001 200004441

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NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE SERVICE. THE FUJIMORI ADMINISTRATION'S SPIN DOCTORS, ON THE OTHER HAND, WILL TRY TO DOWNPLAY MAY 1998 AND LOOK FOR OPPORTUNITIES TO DEMONSTRATE THAT NO HARD FEELINGS LINGER. BUT, WHATEVER IS SAID OR NOT SAID PUBLICLY ABOUT MONTESINOS, WHATEVER SLIGHT IS SENT HIS WAY WILL BE CONSTRUED AS CRITICISM OF THE FUJIMORI ADMINISTRATION AND COULD FURTHER DAMAGE USG-PERUVIAN COUNTERDRUG COOPERATION.

4. (C) THE PAIN LINGERS: EMBARRASSED AND ANGERED IN MAY 1998, THE ALWAYSIMAGE-CONSCIOUS MONTESINOS RETALIATED BY CLOSINGDOWN SOME USG SUPPORTED COUNTERDRUG PROGRAMS UNTIL A FACE-SAVING, COORDINATED PRESS RELEASE DIFFUSED THE SITUATION. OR DID IT? WHILE WE CANNOT CITE SPECIFIC EXAMPLES, MOST IN THE COUNTRY TEAM HAVE SENSED THAT PERU'S [REDACTED]

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ENTHUSIASM FOR WORKING WITH THE UNITED STATES ON COUNTERNARCOTICS ISSUES HAS WANED SOMEWHAT SINCE MAY OF 1998. MONTESINOS, WHILE PROFESSING HIS CONTINUED DEEP COMMITMENT TO THE ISSUE HAS BEEN DISTRACTED, FIRST BY BORDER TENSIONS THAT ALMOST ERUPTED IN RENEWED HOSTILITIES WITH ECUADOR AND MORE RECENTLY BY FUJIMORI REELECTION FEVER. HOWEVER, THE MAY 1998 DUST-UP CONTINUES TO LURK IN THE SHADOWS WHERE MONTESINOS TENDS TO SPEND MUCH OF HIS TIME. WE NEED TO GET HIM AND PERU BEYOND IT. ALSO MONTESINOS WAS CLEARLY IRKED BY THE SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE REPORT LANGUAGE ACCOMPANYING THE PASSAGE OF THE SENATE FOREIGN AID BILL IN WHICH THE COMMITTEE EXPRESSED SERIOUS RESERVATIONS ABOUT ANY INL ASSISTANCE GOING TO THE SIN. WHEN THE U.S. PRESS AND PERUVIAN OPPOSITION EXAGGERATED THE CONSEQUENCES, MONTESINOS TURNED TO US TO CORRECT SOME OF THE COMMITTEE'S LANGUAGE IN THE LOCAL MEDIA. WHEN THE CORRECTION WAS NOT PUBLISHED FAST ENOUGH, A COPY OF OUR CORRESPONDENCE APPEARED MYSTERIOUSLY IN A FULL-PAGE ADVERTISEMENT. SIMILAR LANGUAGE THAT HAS BEEN DRAFTED FOR THE HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE REPORT (MUCH OF IT INACCURATE AS OF THE LAST DRAFT WE HAVE SEEN) WILL NO DOUBT CAUSE ANOTHER ROUND OF MEDIA SPECULATION ABOUT U.S. ASSISTANCE TO THE SIN, AND A MONTESINOS RESPONSE.

5. (C) MONTESINOS IS PART OF THE EQUATION: SINCE 1998 MONTESINOS HAS IN FACT BEEN A MORE PUBLIC FIGURE. PRESIDENT FUJIMORI HAS PUBLICLY PRAISED HIM FOR HIS WORK AGAINST NARCOTICS TRAFFICKERS, COMMON CRIMINALS, AND TERRORISTS. HE AND MONTESINOS APPEARED TOGETHER IN A TELEVISION INTERVIEW COMMEMORATING THE SECOND ANNIVERSARY OF THE END OF THE MRTA HOSTAGE CRISIS AND AT A NEWS CONFERENCE ON THE CAPTURE OF THE LONG-SOUGHT TERRORIST FELICIANO. IF FUJIMORI VIEWS

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MONTESINOS AS A POLITICAL LIABILITY ONE WOULD NOT KNOW IT  
FROM HIS PUBLIC STATEMENTS ABOUT HIS NATIONAL SECURITY  
ADVISOR. IN FACT, FUJIMORI IS DEPENDING ON MONTESINOS TO  
ENSURE HIS REELECTION. WITH A REALIGNED CABINET AND THE  
RETIREMENT OF GENERAL HERMOSA RIOS LATE LAST YEAR, THERE IS  
NO ONE WHO STANDS TOE-TO-TOE WITH MONTESINOS IN THE PERUVIAN  
GOVERNMENT AND NOTHING THAT THE GOVERNMENT DOES ON  
INTELLIGENCE, ENFORCEMENT, AND SECURITY ISSUES OCCURS  
WITHOUT HIS BLESSING. LIKE IT OR NOT, HE IS THE GO TO GUY,  
SHORT OF THE PRESIDENT HIMSELF ON ANY KEY ISSUE,  
PARTICULARLY ANY MAJOR COUNTERNARCOTICS ISSUE.

6. (C) MONTESINOS OFFERS A PEACE PIPE: FOR THE PAST SIX  
MONTHS MONTESINOS HAS PUT OUT INFORMAL FEELERS THROUGH  
VARIOUS CHANNELS THAT HE WOULD VERY MUCH LIKE TO MEET WITH  
GENERAL MCCAFFREY WHENEVER AND WHEREVER, PRESUMABLY TO CLEAR  
THE AIR. WHILE UNTIL NOW WE HAVE FENDED OFF THOSE FEELERS,  
WITH THE PLANNED AUGUST VISIT TO PERU IT WILL BE TRULY  
IMPOSSIBLE TO IGNORE MONTESINOS. TO AVOID CONTACT AND  
INSIST ON MONTESINOS NOT BEING PRESENT AT OFFICIAL MEETINGS  
WOULD COMPLETELY UNDERMINE THE VALUE OF THE VISIT. SIMPLY  
PUT, IF GENERAL MCCAFFREY COMES TO PERU HE MUST COME

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INFO LOG-00 ADS-00 SAS-00 /000W  
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SECSTATE WASHDC 9664

[REDACTED] SECTION 02 OF 02 LIMA 004555

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SUBJECT: D/ONDCP VISIT - THE MONTESINOS FACTOR

EXPECTING TO BE AT EVENTS WHERE MONTESINOS WILL BE PRESENT AND HE SHOULD EXPECT THAT THOSE EVENTS WILL RECEIVE SUBSTANTIAL PRESS COVERAGE AND SPIN FROM BOTH THE ADMINISTRATION AND THE OPPOSITION.

7. (C) WE STRONGLY RECOMMEND THAT GENERAL MCCAFFREY [REDACTED]

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CONSIDER TAKING ADVANTAGE OF THE VISIT TO TAKE MONTESINOS U ON HIS OFFER AND HOLD A BRIEF ONE-ON-ONE ON NEURAL TURF TO HEAR OUT MONTESINOS AND IMPART WHATEVER PERSONA MESSAGE THE GENERAL SEES FIT. WE BELIEVE THAT SUCH A PRIVATE EXCHANGE WITH MONTESINOS UNDER CONTROLLED CIRCUMSTANCES WOULD CLEAR THE AIR AND FINALLY PUT MAY 1998 BEHIND HIM AND US. WHETHER MONTESINOS LIKES THE GENERAL'S MESSAGE OR NOT IS LESS IMPORTANT THAN GIVING HIM THE OPPORTUNITY, AWAY FROM WATCHFUL EYES, TO SAY HIS PIECE AND RECEIVE CANDID FEEDBACK. WE ALSO EXPECT MONTESINOS WILL SHOW UP AT ANY OFFICIAL GOVERNMENT BRIEFING AND ANY PERUVIAN HOSTED EVENT. WE WOULD NOT BE SURPRISED IF HE ATTENDED A MEETING WITH PRESIDENT FUJIMORI. THE BOTTOM LINE, MONTESINOS ONE WAY OR THE OTHER, IN FRONT OF THE CAMERAS OR NOT, WILL GET FACE TIME WITH GENERAL MCCAFFREY AND WE MUST BE PREPARED TO ACKNOWLEDGE THIS FACT PUBLICLY. IF THAT IS NOT ACCEPTABLE THEN THE TRIP IS BEST AVOIDED. HODGES  
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